

THE FROUDE FAMILY IN THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

By
GORDON HUNTINGTON HARPER

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Board of University Studies of the Johns
Hopkins University in Conformity with the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

1932

Extract from *Cardinal Newman and William Froude, F.R.S.*

BALTIMORE
THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS
1933

THE FROUDE FAMILY IN THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

By
GORDON HUNTINGTON HARPER

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Board of University Studies of the Johns
Hopkins University in Conformity with the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

1932

Extract from *Cardinal Newman and William Froude, F.R.S.*

BALTIMORE
THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS

1933



CONTENTS OF COMPLETE DISSERTATION

	PAGE
PREFACE	ii
CHAPTER I. HISTORY OF THE FROUDE FAMILY	1
CHAPTER II. THE OXFORD MOVEMENT	46
CHAPTER III. HURRELL FROUDE	56
I. SOME INFLUENCES UPON HIM	56
II. EARLY INFLUENCES OF HURRELL FROUDE UPON NEWMAN AND KEBLE	68
III. BEGINNINGS OF THE MOVEMENT	87
IV. ARCHDEACON FROUDE'S PART IN THE MOVE- MENT	99
V. FINAL ACTIVITIES AND INFLUENCE OF HURRELL FROUDE	106
VI. HURRELL FROUDE AND THE FORMAL WRIT- INGS OF THE TRACTARIAN PARTY	129
Hurrell's Influence on the <i>Tracts for the</i> <i>Times</i>	132
Hurrell Froude, the <i>British Magazine</i> , and the <i>British Critic</i>	158
Sermons	171
VII. THE PUBLICATION OF THE <i>Remains</i>	181
CHAPTER IV. WILLIAM FROUDE AND NEWMAN	193
II. WILLIAM FROUDE AND THE <i>Grammar of Assent</i>	229
CONCLUSION	273
BIBLIOGRAPHY	280
VITA	284



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/IA41553628_0054

THE FROUDE FAMILY IN THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

This dissertation is an investigation of the activities of Archdeacon Robert Hurrell Froude and of his sons, Hurrell, William, and Anthony in the period centering upon the growth, development, and final decay of the Oxford Movement. The Archdeacon's name was included by Newman in a list of the early leaders of the Movement. A study of the Froude correspondence shows how very frequently Newman and Keble consulted the Archdeacon's judgment on matters of policy.

Hurrell Froude, the eldest of the three brothers, was, for several years, the real driving force of the Movement and to a considerable extent responsible for the early theological development of Newman. I have attempted to show how very great was his responsibility for the main trends in the writing and thinking of the Tractarian party. He first put forward many of the ideas which were later to become their essential points. His enforced absence from Oxford during the important months when the Movement actually began and his comparatively small amount of formal writing have tended somewhat to obscure his name to which is rightfully due much of the credit for the early success of the reform.

William Froude, F.R.S. was not directly connected with the early stages of the Oxford Movement, but he and Mrs. Froude were among Newman's closest friends, and were a decisive influence in his later years. He had known Newman at Oxford as a friend of his brother's to whom he occasionally went for advice on his studies.

After Hurrell's death, William took, in part, his brother's place in Newman's affections. During the years that followed Newman's conversion, these two carried on an elaborate correspondence, which was in the nature of a reasoned debate concerning the truths of religion and science. I have presented evidence to show the effect of this correspondence upon Newman's philosophical thinking as he set it down in his greatest book, the *Grammar of Assent*.

Of James Anthony Froude nothing need be said by way of introduction; his place as a historian has long been secure, and the theory of his "inaccuracy" has in part been modified through the efforts of his accomplished biographer and fellow historian, Herbert Paul. I have devoted very little attention to him in these pages, since he had little connection with the Oxford Movement and, being considered the black sheep of the family, had few contacts with his father and brothers during the important years of their activity.

I have not attempted a study of the entire family, which might, however, lead into the most unexpected by-paths. Margaret, a daughter of the Archdeacon, married William Mallock and became the mother of William Hurrell Mallock, the distinguished author of *The New Republic*. A sister of the Archdeacon was among the first to call upon Wordsworth, then scarcely known as "the poet." The Archdeacon's wife was a Spedding; James Spedding, one of the Cambridge apostles, introduced Anthony Froude to Carlyle. Robert Edmund Froude, the eldest son of William Froude, was also a Fellow of the Royal Society, who carried on the engineering work of his father. He read several papers before the Society. E. M. Froude a daughter of

William, married Baron Anatole von Hügel,¹ the Austrian archaeologist. Ashley Anthony Froude, the son of the historian, was, for many years, connected with the British diplomatic corps, and received the C. M. G. for his work on the Behring Sea Arbitration Committee of 1893.

The comparative prominence of nearly all the members of this unusual family gives an ideal background against which to study the religious revival of the nineteenth century. The whole gamut of attitudes and reactions is illustrated within this small group. The Archdeacon represented the conventional and enlightened attitude of cultured Englishmen. His son Hurrell was on the extreme right wing, an anglo-Catholic who would, I think undoubtedly, have followed, if he had not led, Newman to the Roman Church. William typifies the scientific attitude of carefully reasoned doubt. Anthony is a prototype of the skeptical "younger generation." While he had the greatest personal regard for Newman, he had only contempt for his theological ideals.

In my first section I have presented an account of the history of the Froude family; in succeeding sections I have dealt with what is properly my main interest, the history of their connection with the growth and final development of the Movement. What value this dissertation may have will lie largely in the presentation of new material which offers a basis for a somewhat broader view of certain aspects of the Movement than has heretofore been possible. I am greatly indebted to the Oratorians of Edgbaston, Cardinal Newman's

¹ A brother of Baron Frederich von Hügel, author of *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* (London, 1928).

literary executors, for permission to print for the first time a number of Newman's letters. Baroness von Hügel kindly allowed me to use her father's letters to Newman.

The following pages are an analysis of William Froude's influence upon Newman.

I

INTRODUCTION

I

INTRODUCTION

WHEN John Henry Newman was created Cardinal in 1879, he was an old and enfeebled man. His health was so seriously impaired after the trip to Rome for the conferring of the hat that it was more than once doubtful whether he would be able to take part in the ceremonies, but he managed, with St. Philip's help, to make all the addresses expected of him, replying to each presentation in words which only his genius could have put together. The effort, however, overtaxed his strength, and he had to forego many visits to the Pope and to the Holy Places of Rome. An affection of the lungs confined him to his rooms, and he was able only twice to say Mass even in the private chapel of his own residence.

However ill he might be, Newman felt that there was one task he could not put off for a single day. In the short time a curiously ironic fate had left to him, Newman desired to use his new position for the conversion of important thinkers to the Church, and the person above all others whom he wished most dearly to influence was one of the leading scientists of the day, Fellow of the Royal Society, freethinker, and lifelong friend, William Froude. For thirty-five years Newman had corresponded with Froude largely upon religious matters, endeavoring always to give the arguments for belief in the Roman Catholic Church in a fashion sufficiently cogent to win Froude over to that faith. Froude, however, remained unshaken in his scepticism, and in his replies pointed out to Newman the scientific ob-

jections which made such a step impossible for him. His letters were of great value to Newman in presenting the scientific point of view and had some small influence upon the development of Newman's thought up to the time when he set down his final statement in the *Grammar of Assent*. Although Newman recognized fully the difficulty of convincing Froude, he never despaired of final success, and his first sustained act, after his elevation to the Cardinalate, was to write, in spite of the danger to his health, a long letter, "a marvel of lucidity," in which he presented what he hoped was at last an irrefutable argument for the reasonableness of a belief in God. While he was correcting the rough draft of his argument, word came to him that William Froude was dead.

William Froude had had large claims upon Newman's friendship, for he was a brother of the "bright and beautiful" Hurrell who had helped to lead the Tractarians in their gallant and romantic attempt to save the English Church. Upon Hurrell's early death in 1836, William had succeeded in part to the place left empty in Newman's heart. Born at Dartington in 1810, he had grown up in unusual surroundings. His father, Archdeacon of Totnes, was typical of the more devout clergy of the eighteenth century. He had a lively interest in current affairs, in explorations, particularly those of Franklin, and was himself an artist accomplished enough to win praise from the dictator, Ruskin. He frequently gave to the Tractarians advice of a practical nature, and was himself enrolled as a member of that group. In the intellectual atmosphere of Dartington Parsonage, William and his younger brother, Anthony, lived during their most impressionable years, and here both of them heard the first plans for the

Oxford Movement discussed by Hurrell and his distinguished friends from the University, John Keble and John Henry Newman.

William's share of the Froude genius was sufficient at once to set him apart from his fellows when he went to Westminster School. His letters to Hurrell show him to have been a rather shy young man already more interested in mathematics than in football. Hurrell encouraged him to perfect himself in his studies, but cautioned him not entirely to neglect the more worldly matter of getting on with his companions and enjoying the benefits of competitive sport. In later life William often acknowledged the decisive influence his older brother had upon the formation of his mind. It was from Hurrell that he learned the principles of thinking which enabled him to win a distinguished place in the field of science. Hurrell's letters to him, some of which are given in the appendix, dealt not only with the necessity of right thinking but of right conduct. He advised him especially to distrust his emotions and the wild thoughts to which they could give rise. It will be not uninteresting to note, in the following correspondence, how fully William obeyed this caveat.

In 1828 William Froude entered Oriel College, Oxford, where he immediately drew attention to himself, so Hurrell wrote, by the depth of his science papers, which frequently overreached the abilities of the younger dons. Newman assisted in the direction of William's work, and during Hurrell's absences took upon himself the task of administering "periodical rowings" in classics and prose composition. In such hands it is small wonder that, throughout his life, William was able in his letters to reproduce to perfection the "Oriel style," and to win from his associates the

tribute that of them all he best embodied the classic spirit.

When Froude went up to Oxford, Oriel was just beginning to assume the position, with Balliol, of the "prison house," and to its reputation for learning he contributed by his daily custom of rising at five-thirty to work steadily until two or three. He had at one time considered a medical career but shortly abandoned it for abstract science. Mathematics, in which he took a first, became his chief interest at the University, but he also dabbled in chemistry, and his rooms were made conspicuous in the court by the large stains of acid running from his windows down to the ground two floors below. His chief recreation was sailing, in which Hurrell had coached him, but even in this he turned his scientific bent toward the improvement of bows proper for racing craft.

In 1833 Froude took a position under Henry Robinson Palmer, vice-president of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and worked on the South Eastern Railway. Four years later he joined the engineering staff of Isambard K. Brunel, the designer of the *Great Eastern* steamship. While engaged in work on the Bristol and Exeter Railway, he made a contribution of major importance in propounding what is known to engineers as the "curve of adjustment." In the same year he married Miss Kate Holdsworth, and, in 1844, the two removed to Dartington to care for the aged Archdeacon, who was in failing health. Forced by this circumstance to relinquish his engineering career, Froude turned to experimental science. In 1856 he was asked by Brunel to make some investigations of the motion of ships in waves. This study became the major work of his lifetime and gained for him a place in the first rank of British scientists. His experiments were carried on

privately in the estuaries about Salcombe, and Froude was frequently seen by the natives rowing about apparently playing with toy boats. When on one occasion two uniformed men (naval officers interested in the experiments) were seen at the oars, a story spread about the locality that William Froude was mad and had to be in charge of two "keepers." By 1868 his work had so far progressed that he made formal application to the Chief Constructor of the Navy, Sir Edward James Reed, for the building of a covered experimental tank suitable for testing model ships. His proposals were approved by the Admiralty on February 1, 1870, and the tank was constructed. Froude developed a mechanism whereby models in wax could be cut directly from the plans of the proposed vessel. He also determined a "law of similitude and comparison" whereby, from the results of tests upon the model, he was able to make extraordinarily accurate predictions concerning the behaviour of a full-sized ship.

Froude's development of the experimental tank profoundly affected the course of all naval designing. Out of this work grew his invention of a bilge keel able to hold vessels more steady in wave action. His results were at once applied to British warships and subsequently to the commercial ships of every country. The British Government only recently completed an elaborate tank, dedicated by Stanley Baldwin in November, 1932, as the *William Froude Laboratory*, a part of the new National Physical Laboratory at Teddington. "Today there are more than a score of experimental tanks in existence," Mr. Baldwin said in his speech, "and everyone of them is a monument to the genius and work of Froude."¹ The first purely com-

¹ *Nature* (Nov. 26, 1932), p. 801.

mercial tank built in England in 1881 bore an inscription to William Froude as "the greatest of experimenters and investigators in hydrodynamics."

The Royal Society elected Froude to membership on June 2, 1870, and in 1876 awarded him their Gold Medal. Froude contributed a number of papers to the publications of the Royal Society as well as several to the Institute of Naval Architects.

It is not, however, Froude's scientific career which is of concern here, but rather his private life, particularly as it related to John Henry Newman. That life was a less than ordinarily happy one, and to the unhappiness Newman largely contributed. A close friend not only of William's but also of Mrs. Froude's, Newman corresponded regularly with them, and the topic most frequently discussed was not unnaturally religion. While Newman remained an Anglican his long letters to the Froudes dealt with his position in that faith, and some of them, as will be seen, were of a most intimate nature. After he became a Roman Catholic, Newman introduced into his letters a subtle proselytizing which was not without effect. First one and then another of the Froude family were converted by Newman's influence to Catholicism, until finally William alone remained a Protestant, spiritually isolated from his family. During these years Froude carried on with Newman something of a philosophical inquiry into the nature of the evidence for religious belief.

Mrs. Froude was the first to be converted. She confessed her faith on March 19, 1857. Her action was a great blow both to William and to Archdeacon Froude, who threatened to cut his son out of the inheritance of his considerable fortune, saying he would not

leave his property to Catholics. William offered to resign his place at Dartington in favor of Anthony and to return to his engineering career. But Anthony's militant agnosticism was even more unacceptable than Mrs. Froude's Catholicism, and in the end William inherited the entire estate of £35,000. To Newman's constant influence was now added that of Mrs. Froude, and eventually four children became Catholics, and one of them, Robert Edmund, for a time considered entering the priesthood.

Froude bore his spiritual trials most patiently, never allowing his feeling of isolation to impair his love for his wife and family. He continued to discuss frankly and openly religious questions and their relation to scientific thought. He appreciated the beauty of the Anglican church service and knew from memory many of the poems of the *Christian Year*. In the family circle he read the Bible in a spirit at once sympathetic and understanding, seeking out always the depth of meaning in the most beautiful passages. Upon the birth of his first daughter he had given to the parish church a memorial window. When in later years there was left to him only one child, Mary, who was not a Catholic, he engaged for her a Protestant governess. Even this last spiritual consolation was lost to him upon the child's death in 1863.

Archdeacon Froude died in 1859, and the Froudes moved to Torbay and later built a house, Chelston Cross, near Torquay. Here a brilliant society, English, French, and American, often gathered. Arnold, Jowett, Ruskin, and Brunel were frequent guests. To William Froude foreign governments sent representatives, among them Popoff of the Czar's navy, for consultation on matters of naval design. Froude was a member

of the Athenaeum Club, and by reason of his personal charm and intellectual distinction a popular figure in London society.

In spite of his softness of personal manner, Froude never relinquished his "tough-minded" attitude, and to the end of his life he remained firmly agnostic, sceptical even of the possibility of absolute certainty in secular as well as religious matters. The intimate contact of Newman and Froude, the one passionately believing and the other fiercely sceptical, the influence of one upon the other, and their personal relationship form the subject of the following correspondence.

Mrs. Froude died in 1878, and that winter, Froude, who suffered greatly by the loss, accepted the invitation of the Government to cruise to South Africa on the *Boadicea*. As he was preparing to return to England, he was taken suddenly ill and died at Simon's Town June 4, 1879. He was buried in the military cemetery with full honors on June 12.

Froude's sincere and devoted friendship had been invaluable to Newman. Bound by such close ties of personal affection, Newman felt free to talk to Froude as he could to no other of his friends who were not Catholics. Enjoying such intimacy and appreciating fully the intellectual acumen of his former pupil, Newman found in Froude one with whom he could discuss problems of religious belief which were either unknown to or beyond the grasp of his own circle. Froude was an outstanding thinker in the particular field wherein lay the greatest danger to Catholicism, and from Froude Newman gained a wealth of information and a new viewpoint which served him well in solving the difficulties presented to himself and other Catholics by their beliefs.

Froude may be said in a measure to have served Newman as a testing block upon which to beat out a solution to some of his difficulties, and evidences of Froude's criticism may be found in the *Grammar of Assent*. Froude was of so much assistance to Newman in attempting to solve intellectual problems largely from the very fact that his cast of mind was very different from Newman's. He always believed that he had developed legitimately the principles of thinking Hurrell had instilled in him, and when later he became a complete sceptic, it was, he said, because his thinking had been so largely in the domain of "practical science, where, more than elsewhere, the principles and results of reasonings are confronted with the test of direct experiment."² And when as often as not the results of his careful thinking suffered correction from still further investigation, it is not astonishing that he came to believe the establishment of any permanent truths a fruitless endeavor. Repeated experiences had made him reluctant to accept any proposition not supported by overwhelming evidence of the most practical sort, and even in those cases where he seemed to have arrived at certainty, Froude allowed always for the possibility that the ultimate assumption, small or axiomatic though it might be, upon which every argument rested, was itself wrong. From continued application to problems of a practical nature Froude drew two related rules for his thinking: there is a moral obligation to doubt every proposition and conclusion; the achievement of permanent certainty is impossible. In his own words, "Our 'doubts' in fact appear to me as sacred, . . . more strongly than I believe anything else I believe this—that on no subject whatever, distinctly not in the region

² December 29, 1859.

of the ordinary facts with which our daily experience is consonant, distinctly not in the domain of history or of politics, and yet again *a fortiori* not in that of Theology, is my mind (or as far as I can take the mind of any human being), capable of arriving at an absolutely certain conclusion.”⁸

With such intellectual principles Froude was unable to accept orthodox religious tenets, and in this inability he was representative of a large class of serious thinkers. His arguments against existing creeds, being susceptible of a high degree of demonstration, carried a corresponding preponderance of conviction among those who faced squarely the problem of religious belief. As a scientist interested in reaching the truth, whether in physical or metaphysical questions, he was a distinguished exemplar of that tough-minded school of philosophical liberalism against which Newman spent a life in combat.

Yet in personal relationship Newman did not find Froude tough-minded, but, on the contrary, a sincere and kindly critic of orthodoxy whose great desire was not so much to destroy accepted opinion as it was to establish as far as possible a truth against which no force of untruth could prevail. If he held liberal views, he held them only as a result of a patient sifting of the evidence which produced them. His zeal for repeated correction and his sceptical attitude were a source of some confusion to Newman, who held that only minds religiously disposed were capable of discovering religious truth. Sincerity of purpose was to Newman indispensable in a seeker. Although Newman did not find Froude naturally religious, he did recognize in him a sincere desire to discover whatever truth there was in

⁸ *Ibid.*

religion. He saw in him neither a rude scoffer nor an iconoclast, but an English gentleman (and the gentleman counted much with Newman) who for some reason could not convince himself of the truth of religion. Since the fault did not lie with Froude's sincerity nor entirely with the disposition of his mind, Newman was forced to believe that it lay with the state of Christian apologetic, and he set about discovering some polemical means for overcoming Froude's intellectual difficulties. The task was all the more congenial since Froude himself enjoyed serving as a target for the arrows of Newman's dialectic by which they both hoped to solve the great problem presented in the nineteenth century by the clash of religion and science.

It was, therefore, much in the spirit of philosophical inquiry that during the years between 1838 and 1844 Newman and Froude had a number of conversations on religious topics which they frequently continued by letter. Newman seems for a time to have regarded their inquiry in the old relationship of tutor and pupil, and he occasionally had some fears that his younger friend might be "unsettled," a feeling he himself appreciated only too keenly. Newman did not have the same hesitation in outlining his thoughts to Mrs. Froude, whose cast of mind was more disposed toward religious belief, for she had repeatedly urged him to write to her on such matters. Hence the practice grew up of including her in the correspondence, Newman intending that she should always show his letters to her husband.

No conclusions seem to have been drawn immediately; rather, the question became, for Newman at least, yearly more complicated. His intellectual progress from 1838 to the writing of Tract 90 in 1841 is too well known to review here. From 1841 to 1845

Newman was only waiting for the decision which could not have come sooner than it did. The state of his mind was suspected by many of his friends, and it was commonly thought that soon he would "go over". Nevertheless, no one dared intrude questions upon him until at last Mrs. Froude, in July, 1843, was so bold as to write asking directly whether or not he was contemplating a change to Rome in the very near future. To her question Newman replied:

Littlemore.

July 28, 1843.

My dear Mrs. Froude,

I wish I could write you such an answer to your letter as it deserves. I mean a real open letter, saying first what I think, but I feel it so difficult to bring out what I would say, that when I attempt it, I become unreal. One difficulty is the analysing and knowing one's feelings—but another is to be able to exhibit them on occasion. I do not carry them in my hand, and, much as I wish it, I cannot put you in possession of them on the mere asking.

There is no doubt at all that I am approximating towards Rome; not any doubt that those who are very much about me see this little as I wish it. These two facts, coupled with the very significant and corresponding fact of the Bishops, Heads of religious parties, and organs of religious opinion having disowned me, have determined me on resigning St. Mary's, though as yet I have not made this known, nor shall I till the time comes. I feel I am no longer able to fulfil such a *trust*, as a pastoral charge in our Church implies; and, as on the whole I have hitherto ever been aiming at obeying and supporting her rulers, to the best of my ability, so, when I can no longer do this, and especially when they refuse my assistance, it seems a call upon me to release myself from the obligation. As time has gone on, I have become more dissatisfied with the established system, and *its* *conductors* have become more dissatisfied with me; I do not see what good

can come of continuing a relation, which each party wishes brought to an end.

If I were ever so sure of continuing just in my present state of mind, these considerations would tell—but it is obvious that, taking circumstances as they are, I may get into serious difficulties if I continue to hesitate about a step which has already employed my mind for three years.

Speaking candidly with you I will say that I do not see beyond this. I shall retire from St. Mary's, if nothing happens, as quietly as I can, and then shall remain here, with pretty much the same occupations as I have at present. Alas! there is something very awful in putting an end to duties which have lain upon me now for 16 years nearly, and, as it were, making up a book which will not be opened till another world. And if you had any idea how miserably those duties have been fulfilled by me, you would partly enter into my feelings on losing all opportunity of retrieving them.

As to the future, I think that of one thing every one may be quite certain, as far as I dare promise anything of myself, that I should do nothing sudden, or without people in general being prepared for it. It may be the will of Providence to leave me just where I am, or to lead me on further. His guidance is commonly slow. Quick movements offend people, as for other reasons, so because they are unlike the effects of a heavenly guidance. And they shock, unsettle, and distress them besides.

Now, my dear Mrs. Froude, this will seem to you a very cool letter, but you asked a very cool question and as you are about the only person who has so asked, you are the only person who has been so answered.

Let us not take thought for the morrow, but be content with what is put before us for the day present. *You* feel this quite, as your letter shows. I was very sorry my talk with William was interrupted. I had long wished for one, yet dreaded it; dreaded it, because it is not pleasant to be running the risk of unsettling a person. And though I know well he is of far too manly a merit to be swayed by another in such a matter, yet I might be suggesting objections to him in the

course of our conversation which would afterwards hang about him and trouble him. I have had no hesitation of writing freely to you, because you have anticipated me.

Ever yrs affectionately,
John H. Newman.

So particular was the claim of the Froudes upon him that Newman found it only natural, once he had made a beginning, to keep them informed of his progress toward Rome. By April, 1844, he felt the change to be imminent, and so he opened fully to Froude "a subject which I have long wished to write to you about . . . and felt myself quite cruel toward you and your wife not to do so." There followed, then, at intervals of a few days, the series of long letters which make up the following chapter of this book. Newman described all the difficulties which were besetting him in these letters, and they may be thought of therefore as a contemporary "apologia" which is all the more valuable from having been written during the days of strain and not recollected in the comparative tranquillity of twenty years later.

For Newman the letters were a catharsis of his religious doubts and emotions. His ostensible reason for writing was to give such an account of himself as might at the same time answer a question Froude had put to him. "I am in great perplexity to know what to do about my letters," he wrote Mrs. Froude, "I began with a view of relieving a difficulty of William's, not of urging arguments against our existing position. But in my last letter I was betrayed into doing so." ⁴ But after he had begun to discover to the Froudes the intimate work-

⁴ April 12, 1844.

ings of his mind, he persevered to a conclusion, not so much for their sakes as for the benefit to himself. "Since my object in writing," Newman explained, "has ceased to be that with which I began (viz. that of removing a painful feeling which William seemed to have) . . . I have become very anxious about the effect of my letters upon you . . . *for I am not writing with a purpose so much as finishing a subject I may not otherwise get myself to work out.*"⁵

The change in attitude that came over Newman marked the first occasion of real importance where he used Froude as an anvil upon which to beat out the solutions to his own pressing problems. Within a few years purely personal considerations were to make Froude a much more critical person upon whom to test philosophical arguments.

On October 8, 1845, to the regret and often to the horror of the many friends who looked to him as their spiritual adviser, Newman made his general confession of faith in the Roman Catholic Church. If his defection was a serious blow to Anglicanism, it was the personal repercussions upon his friends that gave Newman most concern. He felt at times like a lost leader, and the pain of separating from Oxford was with him to the day of his death. Many of his friends he did not see again for years, and many he never saw again. The breaking of such intimate ties of association brought a loneliness which there were few friends to assuage, but among the few Protestants who still loved him and sympathized with him, none was more understanding than William Froude. If at this time Newman was more widely separated from him on philosophical

⁵ *Ibid.* Italics mine.

grounds, he was certainly not so in affectionate regard, and Froude's very kindness made Newman rely the more heavily upon him for advice in approaching the troublesome problems which were presenting themselves. To whatever question he might pose, Newman received a criticism which, while he desired it to be penetrating and impartial, he was none the less grateful for its having been given always in the most courteous of terms. And so, after 1845, the correspondence between Newman and the Froudes (often addressed to Mrs. Froude) continued as before upon its philosophical course.

Within a few years, however, a circumstance arose which severely tried Froude's impartiality and at the same time directed with greater intensity his whole acumen to a consideration of the problem of the rational basis for a belief in Roman Catholicism. This circumstance was Newman's proselytizing of Mrs. Froude. Newman was not a professional proselytizer, like Manning, gauging his usefulness by the number and prominence of his converts. He urged Catholicism upon Mrs. Froude as one would urge knowledge upon the ignorant; he felt that he possessed the secret of eternal blessedness, and he wished to share it with those he loved most dearly. Froude protested against what seemed to him the unfairness in attempting deliberately to influence a mind naturally biased by temperament toward Catholicism. He felt that Newman did not recognize the highly dubious nature of the evidence for Catholicism, and thus to Froude, who held passionately to the uncertainty of everything, Newman's dogmatizing was actually painful. While Froude heartily encouraged intellectual inquiry, whether into Catholicism or any other problem, he maintained

that inquiry should be free from personal persuasion. He felt that Newman was rather exceeding the bounds of disinterested investigation when he began to urge upon Mrs. Froude the particular points of Catholic belief most likely to appeal to her sympathetic mind. He protested the situation to Newman, who at once acknowledged the error of his zeal. "Your dear wife," he wrote in reply, "has said she would not write to me again—and I assure you, my dearest William, I shall not write to her—but you can't hinder me (nor wish to hinder me) praying, whatever prayers are worth." ⁶

Nevertheless, Newman did not cease to write to Mrs. Froude letters presenting the claims of the Catholic faith, and Mrs. Froude herself finally pointed out to Newman the awkward situation his letters caused. But considerations of worldly delicacy weighed little against Newman's desire to put before her in a true light the blessings of Catholicism, and it was not a month before he wrote her, "Do not fancy you can put me in a painful position to dear William, I don't mind differing with him. I don't mind giving you advice in which he would not concur. But I wish to be sure I tell him when I do it. He is so true and tender, but I leave you safely to him. But I can never disguise from him what I think and feel about you." ⁷

Newman might here appear in a bad light were it not that he believed completely in the truth of what he urged, and Froude acknowledged his sincerity and honesty of purpose. While Froude felt that Newman was presenting the case one-sidedly, he also realized that it did not appear so to Newman. And Newman, not unaware of the delicacy of the situation, was

⁶ April 10, 1854.

⁷ May 5, 1854.

nevertheless willing to suffer some unpleasantness in his desire to confer eternal benefit upon his friends. Throughout his correspondence Newman never wrote to make cheap points but endeavored always to put forth his arguments straightforwardly, allowing them to stand as much as possible upon their merits. He sought to understand the perplexities of his friends and to make sympathetic suggestions which might not readily occur to an uneasy mind. Both the Froudes were aware of Newman's real motive in writing and appreciated his desire to share with them a truth which seemed to him to be temporarily hidden from their eyes. Because he understood Newman's pious motive and because he shared in his zeal for truth, Froude did not forbid the continuation of Newman's correspondence with his wife; rather, he entered upon it himself.

Froude entered this particular phase of the correspondence for a single reason, to present opposite arguments in an attempt to arrive at the truth which he felt lay somewhere between Newman and himself. What had before amounted to a disinterested argument upon a metaphysical question now had added to it the incentive of personal moment. Holding intellectual honesty above every other ideal, Froude could but be immeasurably distressed by his wife's leanings toward Catholicism, for to him the whole Catholic argument appeared but a tissue of supposition; there was no single proposition that did not seem to him insecurely based or unsupported by practical evidence. Consequently it was with real anguish that Froude saw one dear to himself foregoing every claim to rationalism and accepting a philosophy logical enough within itself but incapable of verification and therefore to him essentially unacceptable.

With the succeeding years Froude found himself more and more actively opposed to Newman's thinking, and their correspondence in the following chapters will be seen to take on the color of a philosophical battle. In so far as there was a material victory, it lay with Newman, for to Froude's deep distress his wife joined the Catholic Church in 1857, and within a few years she was followed by her two sons, Hurrell and Edmund. The additional loss of his sons was to Froude almost insupportable, particularly that of Edmund, who had begun to display distinct signs of the Froude genius for science.

Despite his personal interest which urged him to present only arguments telling against religious belief, such was the impartiality of Froude's mind that he was as concerned to arrive at some solution of the problem as he was to prevent by argument Mrs. Froude's relinquishing her intellectual integrity. He displayed to an amazing degree the truly philosophic cast of mind which enabled him to regard dispassionately a problem which was at the same time of vital personal consequence. His genius bore the characteristic stamp of humility. It was not his wish ruthlessly to destroy religious belief. He had from youth an innate sympathy with the Anglican Church in which he had grown up, and all his life he retained a love for the beauty it fostered, but he would have truth in that beauty, and it was with the purpose to discover as far as possible the truth that Froude continued to correspond with Newman. He felt throughout that if Newman were able to establish the certainty of Roman Catholicism, he need then have no slightest regret over his wife's professing that faith; indeed, in that case, he was prepared himself to accept it with only the single

reservation that he might give it up immediately in the event that a preponderance of new evidence should be at any time brought against it.

Froude desired that his opponent's arguments should enjoy the same degree of elucidation he attempted to secure for his own, and hence there grew up the paradoxical situation of Froude's suggesting upon several occasions arguments which he felt Newman might possibly be able to make tell against the very tenets he held most dear. And hence it was, too, that Froude, on behalf not only of himself but of men of science generally, urged Newman really and fully to work out his argument for the reasonableness of a belief in God. It was Froude's correspondence which served in part as an incentive for Newman to do what he might not have done without this urging, and that was to marshal his thoughts for an extended answer to a problem so immense as that of the grounds for religious belief. In replying to one letter in which Froude had outlined considerations he thought important, Newman wrote, "The line you draw out in your letter is familiar to me and I don't even know when I first began to feel it, not that you do not bring it out more clearly than I perhaps have done to myself. *I will keep your letter before me to use.* Still I have long meditated on its subject. I think it a fallacy . . . but I don't think it easy to show it to be so. It is one of various points I have steadily set before me as requiring an answer and an answer from me."⁸

When the *Apologia* appeared four years later, it did something toward answering the question, but it did not directly attack the broad problem underlying the difficulty of attaining by reasonable means a belief in

⁸ January 2, 1860. Italics mine.

God. It gave an extraordinary view of the logical and psychological considerations which had weighed with a single man in accepting the Roman Catholic faith, but as an apologetic it was scarcely applicable to the needs of the many. When, therefore, within a few weeks there appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, of which Anthony Froude was then editor, an article by Fitzjames Stephen, "Dr. Newman's Apologia", in which the idea of "probability as the guide of life" was touched on, Froude thought it opened to Newman an opportunity for rebutting the scientific critics as crushingly as he had Kingsley. He wrote calling Newman's attention to the article and expressing the hope that he would answer it, first because it stated the sceptical case so succinctly, and then because "the counter view which so entirely satisfies you must be capable of very powerful and very clear justification, and you are of all men the one to undertake the exposition of this."⁹

What Froude really urged was that Newman write the book which ultimately appeared as the *Grammar of Assent*. It was late in the day, Newman felt, to begin so strenuous a task, and he had many misgivings in spite of the feeling that not yet had he exerted that influence over men's minds which had been for years his great ambition. Newman was sixty-four years old, and so far every great endeavor of his had been brought to an inglorious conclusion through the interference of his superiors; his work in the Oxford Movement, his plans for the Irish University and for Catholic education in Oxford had been set at naught by Protestants and Catholics alike. He had begun to think of himself as a *miles emeritus* and not as one girding himself for so

⁹ October 8, 1864. The idea of "probability" (found in Pascal) was by no means new in the Church.

severe an encounter as this promised to be. Nevertheless he did begin tentatively to outline to Froude the probable course his thought would take. He concluded his letter with words which show something of his reliance upon Froude's generous and kindly criticism, "I have many trials and discouragements in the midst of enormous mercies, but should I be led to pursue the subject of this letter (which would be by very slow marches) *I should ask your leave to put various points before you*, as iron girders are sent to the trying house."¹⁰

It was six years before Newman finally gave to the problem of reasonable religious belief the solution which had been developing in his mind since the delivery of his *University Sermons*. The thinking in the *Grammar of Assent* had its roots in the lecture halls of Oxford where Newman had first read Butler's *Analogy*, a book which perhaps more strongly than any other had influenced a generation of Oxford men. Hurrell Froude too had drawn much of his intellectual inspiration from it, and in their official capacity as tutors at Oriel both of them had so implanted in William the dictum of Butler's that probability is the guide of life that it formed the permanent basis of his later thought. From this common point William Froude and Newman had set out upon different courses and travelled always further apart; and yet a careful examination of the progress of each one would probably reveal no error in logic, proving what Newman had always maintained, that from a single source two logical minds might nevertheless diverge.

Newman's philosophical creed in regard to religious belief relegated reason (by which he meant, with

¹⁰ January 18, 1860. Italics mine.

Coleridge, the *Verstand*, the power of proceeding logically in intellectual matters) to a place secondary to faith, which in his conception amounted to a kind of super-reason not unlike Coleridge's conception of the *Vernunft*. A fundamental point of his belief was that one attains religious truth differently from the way one arrives at the truth in secular matters. In the latter field conclusions are drawn solely by the logical reasoning faculty, the *Verstand*, and one accepts as true that side of a question having the preponderance of evidence or of probabilities in its favor. But for arriving at the truths of religion, Newman believed that a different technic was necessary from the fact that the reason which operated on the natural phenomena of the material world was incapable of transcending to the realm of the supernatural. For attaining supernatural truths a particular disposition or quality of mind was indispensable. To a simply reasoning mind, relying only on the *Verstand*, a portion of the evidence concerning supernatural phenomena was imperceptible; only the super-reasoning faculty of the mind could apprehend it. Hence, only to the religiously disposed were the truths of religion possible.

Newman apprehended the existence of God through conscience and through the analogy of the natural and the revealed constitution of the world. His concern was not to prove the existence of God but only to establish a means for the ordinary man to believe reasonably in His existence. His effort, therefore, was directed to discovering and developing arguments of such a reasonable nature that the ordinary man could without hesitation give whole-hearted assent to them and thereupon attain to that comfortable state of certitude from which he need have no slightest doubt that

he would ever be shaken. Newman analyzed the psychological and logical processes involved in giving to arguments the assent which produces a state of certitude. He distinguished two kinds of assent, notional and real; notional assent being assent to an idea, real to a thing. "In its notional assents as well as in its inferences," Newman wrote in the *Grammar of Assent*, "the mind contemplates its own creations instead of things; in real, it is directed toward things, represented by the impressions which they have left on the imagination."¹¹ The change from notional to real assent is like that from theory to practice. "It will sometimes happen," Newman said, in illustrating this point, "that those who acquitted themselves but poorly in class, when they come into the action of life, and engage in some particular work, which they have already been learning in its theory and with little promise of proficiency, are suddenly found to have what is called an eye for that work—an eye for trade matters, or for engineering, or a special taste for literature—which no one expected from them at school, while they were engaged on notions."¹² Our nature is so constituted that we assent more readily to things than to ideas, and this real assent alone produces a state of certitude which is indefectible. Our notional assents are naturally less convincing. With this distinction made, Newman's problem was then to show that one may bridge the gap from notional to real assent to the idea of God's existence and arrive at the consequent state of certitude.

In bridging this gap Newman relied upon a fact of

¹¹ *Grammar of Assent* (London, 1924), p. 75.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

human experience which led him to believe that the primary sources of our assent are not logical but go back to our emotional and practical nature. Upon occasion we "think with our whole being" and arrive at truths of which we should have been incapable by the use of only the logical reasoning faculty (*Verstand*). "All men have a reason," said Newman, "but not all men can give a reason." A favorite illustration of his was of the weather-wise farmer predicting rain when every perceptible sign pointed to a clear day. He pointed out that geniuses have often been noted for this ability to overgo the merely logical faculty of the mind and arrive in a flash at the truth. It was by such flashes that Napoleon could with a glance take in the disposition of enemy forces and have immediately a counter-plan in mind. In mathematics Newton had had the same sort of intuition. Newman's whole argument depended upon the validity of this instinctive ability to arrive at right conclusions through the "accumulative force of a multitude of reasons which if taken singly were only probabilities." To this instinctive faculty he gave the name of the illative sense.

It was about the potentiality of the illative sense that much of Newman's correspondence with Froude revolved. Faced with the problem of demonstrating to a practical scientist a practical means for accepting a belief in God, Newman had of necessity to use arguments of a practical sort, and he singled out this particular psychological experience because its existence was universally recognized. If, then, he could also establish its validity among a generality of thinking men, he felt the problem would be satisfactorily solved. Newman had for a long time been working toward this conclusion, that in the illative sense lay the means of

establishing his case, but he had not so far developed it in words. When finally in 1864 he realized the all-importance of this particular point, it must have been with some trepidation that he specifically propounded it to Froude for his criticism as, in his own words, "iron girders are sent to the trying house." On no other occasion had he submitted a problem of such vital importance. He had before availed himself freely of Froude's criticism, both in conversation and by letter, to sharpen ideas which were not entirely clear in his own mind, but he had not outlined anything of such vital importance. Newman felt that if Froude could be made to admit that the manner of attacking secular matters differed from that of religious matters and also that the make-up of the mind was itself the ruling factor in arriving at the truth in questions concerning the supernatural, then he might himself the more confidently rely upon the argument which had satisfied one so sceptical.

Froude's answer was sufficiently in agreement to imbue Newman with confidence, for in his reply he used the very words Newman felt most pertinent to the question. "At least it seems to be," Froude said in giving the assurance Newman so much desired, "a tenable view, *a priori*, that men are intended to deal differently with their conclusions when these lead up into Religion from that way in which they deal with conclusions relating to the ordinary affairs of life . . . as if instinct were to guide them in one case, logic in the other . . . if the distinction is regarded as sound, it seems at once necessary to assume that men are gifted with an instinctive faculty which enables them to perceive with certainty the facts of a supernatural occurrence, and to recognize it as supernatural at once

and by a conscious act of unerring recognition instead of by intricate (and to a man of science impossible) process of determining in the first place that it is not natural." ¹³

Newman chose to accept Froude's letter as entirely sanctioning the argument submitted to him, and he proceeded to develop his thought in that direction in the *Grammar of Assent*. His argument when finished was imperfect, and Newman was not unaware of it. There remained always objections unanswered, but Newman felt that he was at least on the right track and that such imperfections as existed arose rather from faulty execution than from mistaken premises.

Froude recognized at least the possibility of Newman's being rightly directed, but he had not meant to offer all the encouragement Newman chose to believe. He had worded his reply carefully, and while he thought Newman's distinguishing between technics as applied to secular and religious questions was a "tenable view," a priori, he added that an "abundant crop of intractable difficulties arise when one attempts to reduce the distinction into a rule of practical application." Moreover he felt most sceptical about the possibility of the human mind's immediately and unerringly recognizing a supernatural event, because, he said, it was "extremely difficult if not impossible to draw a clear and available line between the probabilities which lead up to religion and those which belong to common life so interwoven the two classes of question are when one really looks into them." ¹⁴

Newman set about overcoming these intractable difficulties. His attempt, brilliant though it was as an intellectual *tour de force*, was largely unsuccessful. His

¹³ October 8, 1864.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

reliance upon instinctive thinking, thinking with one's whole being (therefore partly with the emotions), made a primary consideration the natural make-up of the person doing the thinking. Thus the very human tendency to believe what is most congenial received from Newman a whole-hearted sanction where a cautious analysis would have been more consistent with the spirit of philosophical inquiry. Reduced to its simplest terms, Newman's argument approached dangerously near the proposition that belief produced truth. "*We can believe what we choose*," Newman wrote in 1847, "We are answerable for what we choose to believe."¹⁵ Consequently one to whom religious thinking was congenial could with small difficulty arrive at a certainty personally satisfying in matters of religion, and anyone who by reason of temperament found it impossible to arrive at such certitude had only to exercise the "will" and induce a more sympathetic attitude, whereupon a perception of the truth of religion (and of the Roman Catholic faith) would naturally follow.

In spending so much of the force of his argument on analyzing the illative sense Newman did not sufficiently attend to defining or analyzing the "right state of mind" which alone instinctively found the truth. Newman himself arrived at what he believed to be the truth by giving free play to his natural propensities toward religious thinking. Froude's attitude, like that of scientists in general, of course was that the human race has progressed largely through overcoming such natural propensities, through attacking primitive impulses and submitting them to the control of reason. Experience taught Froude that natural promptings, inferences from insufficient data, conclusions based on desires, were

¹⁵ June 27, 1847.

more often untrue than true, at least so far as a standard of truth could be established through scientific verification. Truth was to Froude immutable, and he felt that supernatural truths, in so far as they could be examined at all, ought to be susceptible of corroboration by the natural means of science.¹⁶ Religious and scientific truth should, he believed, fit into a single system wherein neither contradicted the other. The methods of investigation might differ in the two cases, he admitted, but he could not conceive of ultimate contradiction.

In relying on human experience, as he did very wisely, Newman unfortunately neglected another fact of experience quite as universally recognized as instinctive promptings; namely, that the certainty which these promptings often produce is frequently proved ephemeral. Where we have been once certain, we come later to be uncertain, and the unsettlement generally arises from an accretion of new information. Froude knew for himself how impossible it was to hold a single tenet as indefectibly certain; even a remote possibility of new information weighing against his conclusion was nevertheless sufficient for him to keep his mind "settled in unsettlement." Newman had gracefully overleaped this difficulty by making a scholastic distinction between convictions and certitudes. He admitted that one might be positive about a particular

¹⁶ This was also the orthodox view. It will be noted that of the two men it was not Newman but William Froude who was on the side of orthodoxy, for theologians all maintained, as Newman acknowledged, that the truths of religion were to be proved by the logical reasoning processes of the *Verstand*. Newman did not argue that his own method was the only means for proving religious truth, but he maintained that it was the actual method of the generality of men, who were naturally unversed in technical theology, and that the method was a valid one.

point and yet at a later date for reasons perhaps of additional information change one's mind. In such a case one had not attained a state of certitude; one had attained only a conviction. In a state of conviction one allowed, if only subconsciously, for the possibility of a change of opinion. Certitude was a right conviction which one *knew* was right, and it was indefectible. Froude of course had only convictions. He could not attain a state of unchanging certitude because such confidence in the durability of human opinion was impossible to him as it was to many another.

Direct and specific sources for Newman's thought were remarkably few. Newman's greatest indebtedness seems to have been to the *Zeitgeist*—to what he called in the *Apologia* a "spirit afloat"; for there was undoubtedly something in the very air which affected like minds in similar fashion at the same time. The Catholic revivals in France and Germany closely paralleled the Oxford Movement, and all three owed much of their motivating force to the prevailing spirit of Romanticism. It was partly at least the *Zeitgeist* which led the Abbé Bautain, one of the French Traditionalists, to develop an argument for religious belief almost identical with the thought of Newman's *University Sermons*. Like Newman he relied on insight, on a super-reasoning faculty of the mind, for arriving at belief. Though Newman was aware of the French movement, he owed nothing to it, and denied specifically any indebtedness to the *fidéisme* of Bautain, as he likewise denied conscious indebtedness to Coleridge. Newman's thought was an extraordinarily personal product, but one of the definite influences upon him, which can be established with certainty, was that of William Froude, and it is to an account of that influence that the following pages are devoted.

VITA

Gordon Huntington Harper was born at Cleveland, Ohio, on October 14, 1904. He came to Baltimore in 1916 and entered Gilman Country School, from which he was graduated in 1923. He took a Bachelor of Arts degree at Princeton University in 1927. The following year he spent traveling in Europe and the Near East and also registered for a time at the University of Grenoble, where he took a minor diploma. He was a research student at King's College, Cambridge during the academic year 1928-29, and there engaged in a study of the Oxford Movement under the direction of the Reverend James M. Creed. He returned to Johns Hopkins University to work under Professor Raymond D. Havens for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, which he received in 1932. Publication: *Cardinal Newman and William Froude, F. R. S., A Correspondence*: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933.

